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What Workers Talk About When They Talk About War

BY JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

"You know what they say: a conservative is a liberal who was mugged. I was under those towers, and it changed me". Dan Walker, a firefighter with Engine 212 in Brooklyn, had noticed my red, white and blue peace sign button, and somehow the conversation turned to the subject of war. They call 212 The People's Firehouse because back in the1970s, when arson was New York City's de facto redevelopment policy and firehouses in poor and working-class neighborhoods were being shut down like runaway factories, the people of Williamsburg successfully fought to save it. Walker told me he'd never been much of a drum-beater for war, but something as arbitrary as time—the fifty-four seconds between when he, his enginemates and some workers at the World Trade Center escaped from Tower One and saw it collapse—"that changed me, and it hurts my heart to say that, it really hurts my heart, but it did".

I met Walker at a bar called Teddy's, where some of the same people who'd fought for the firehouse were holding a fundraiser for HERE Local 100, whose members used to have jobs at Windows on the World. More than a month had passed since the towers fell, but restaurant workers who'd lost seventy-five colleagues, union and nonunion, were crying as if it had been only days. In most of the city the memory is not quite so raw. There are services to provide, an economy on the skids and, for some, a war to think about. Earlier that evening at a meeting of the New York Central Labor Council, Brenda Stokely, president of AFSCME Local 215/ DC1707 representing city workers in the nonprofit sector, read out a statement issued by an ad hoc group called New York City Labor Against the War:

"September 11 has brought indescribable suffering to New York City's working people. We have lost friends, family members and coworkers of all color, nationalities and religions—a thousand of them union members. An estimated one hundred thousand New Yorkers will lose their jobs. We condemn this crime against humanity and mourn those who perished. We are proud of the rescuers and the outpouring of labor support for victims' families. We want justice for the dead and safety for the living. And we believe that George Bush's war is not the answer…"

When she finished, adding that the statement had been endorsed by her local, by twelve principal officers of city unions, by 260-plus New York unionists and 100-plus labor people from around the country, there was polite applause and some unspoken anger. Between the silence and the tears lies a space for all the conversations within labor that haven't happened, or have happened half-way, the conversations about war and foreign policy that some people are too afraid even to consider, and that others believe must begin, and soon. The question is, How?

Working-class people have typically not been the first ones to show up at a peace rally. Individual workers and unions opposed the war in Vietnam, but it wasn't until 1971 that unions acting in concert broke with the AFL-CIO to form Labor Against the War. In the 1980s labor components emerged in the nuclear freeze, antiapartheid, and Central America solidarity movements, but it's not as if every

(**Workers** *continued on page 5)*

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Our Little Secrets

Why Green Lost

Dave Marsh sends us this report. Aside from being a longtimeCounterPuncher, Dave coedits the terrific Rock 'n Rap Confidential.

In the November 2001 elections, the Northeast was swept by Democrats. For the first time in decades, Democrats in New Jersey seized the governorship and both houses of the legislature. In Connecticut, Democrats took over almost the entire city government of Norwalk, the mayor's post in Waterbury, and even the city government of Greenwich, the Bush family seat. But in New York City, where Democratic registrations outnumber Republican by 4-1, the guy who got elected mayor is not only a Republican political novice who trailed by double digits coming out of the primary, he's a Red Sox fan. Mark Green never mentioned it.

Michael Bloomberg is also a billionaire with a business deeply entangled in city affairs, and he's made no effort to remove himself from it while spitting in the eye of city campaign finance regulations by spending $60 million to get the job, which you'd think his opponent would have hammered as a signal of how he'll handle those conflicts. If the conflict issue arose during the mayoral campaign, it wasn't Mark Green's doing.

The last week of the campaign, Bloomberg fell into an embrace with Rudy Giuliani who, even since 9/11, remains feared and hated by black and Latino voters. In fact, Giuliani was vulnerable to exposure of the autocratic, thuggish, deceitful way he actually ran affairs downtown during the post-WTC attack crisis. Mark Green had the same information about Giuliani being Giuliani that CounterPunch ran several weeks ago. (I know, because I gave it to his staff.) It came from notes taken by a city council member with comments from other officials from the affected area. Green never used it, even though he was tarred and feathered for saying he could have done as well or better than Giuliani in managing the crisis.

But that doesn't explain why Green lost the election. Nor was it the fact that such big name Democrats as Ed Koch and Hugh Carey turned on Green out of personal dislike or because of Green's pathetic last-minute attack ads slamming Bloomberg for sexual harassment. It wasn't even because Green was the only idiot in the Democratic primary willing to say that, because Rudy was so swell at handling things after the attack that the Mussolini of the Hudson should be given the extra months in offices for which he'd been whining.

Mark Green isn't mayor of New York today because black voters finally said "enough" to white liberal racism and spited him by voting for his opponent. They had good reason for doing so. Green spent a year trying to have it both ways. He had solid credentials as the only big-name pol in town who had consistently attacked Giuliani for his bullying and bigotry. But his first move in the campaign was to bring forth Bill Bratton, the police commissioner Giuliani deposed for being better liked than the mayor. The message Green thought he was sending may have been about sticking it to Rudy. But Bratton is mainly a cop, and not just a cop but a cop who pioneered the police profiling and stop-and-search techniques that created the conditions for the murders of Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismund, among too many others. White voters may not have paid attention to this-but black voters did.

Green's attacks on Fernando Ferrer, his Hispanic opponent in the run-off-New York primaries, weren't based on Ferrer being a political hack, which he is, but were laced with implications that Ferrer was unqualified because he came from the wrong part of town. When a Bloomberg staffer got caught with racist literature, the staffer lost his job. But when it was revealed that Green's aides held a meeting in Brooklyn to figure out how to exploit Ferrer's ties to Al Sharpton in order to win more votes from Jews there, Green did nothing. As a result, Ferrer refused to campaign for Green; Sharpton threatened a black boycott of the election; and all the major black-owned media supported Bloomberg.

Green got less than half the Latino vote in a city where Democrats always do much better. Bloomberg got almost 30 per cent of the black vote, which cost Green at least ten to 15 points. Sounding like a Naderite talking about Al Gore, Muhammad said that Green winning "would have been a great tragedy". What happened here in New York was predictable, not because Mark Green is a fool but because this is the way the Democrats now run their affairs.

Green has been trying to become a high elected official since he ran for the Senate against Al D'Amato in 1986. That year, he asked me, through a contributor, for help gaining access to performers to help in his campaign. When told that the price was helping to register minority voters in Harlem, Green responded (I was told), "I can't do that, I'm Jewish". Imagine a black candidate saying such a thing. Green, who could not have won the election without a huge black turnout, was trounced, visiting six more years of D'Amato sleaze upon the nation.

In 1992, learning nothing from this, the Democrats ran Robert Abrams against D'Amato. This was the same Robert Abrams who had just written the report assailing Sharpton and company for their behavior in the Tawana Brawley affair. To say that this was tone-deaf to race is redundant. Abrams also got trounced. When Giuliani signalled his political intentions by participating in a racist anti-David Dinkins police riot on the steps of City Hall, prominent Democrats did nothing to

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head him off. Again, there was no outreach to minority voters, even though Rudy called Dinkins, the city's first black mayor, "a washroom attendant".

Back to the recent race. "I think the [Democratic] Party is in intensive care from self-inflicted wounds", Sharpton told the N.Y. Daily News. To confirm it, party chairman Terry McAuliffe condemned not Green but the pollster and consultant, both Democrats, who created ads showing voters saying they were Democrats who couldn't vote for Green because of the racism of his attacks on Ferrer. In fact, all Bloomberg's consultants were Democrats including the notorious David Garth, who ran the racist campaigns of Ed Koch and Al Gore in hs '88 New York primary, and William Cunningham, adviser to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the white supremacist who coined the terms "benign neglect" and "speciesization" to defraud and defame black people.

In fact, since Bloomberg was a Democrat until he decided he wanted to be mayor, it would make much more sense for McAuliffe to announce that the Democrats were officially merging with the Republicans in order to prevent such unnecessary conflict in the future.

VICTORY IN SO. CAROLINA

Chris Kromm sends us this victory bulletin, fitting coda to his piece in CounterPunch on the Charleston 5 earlier this fall.

The Charleston Five are free. The case of the South Carolina longshoremen, whose minor picket-line scuffle with police nearly two years ago swept them into a colossal conflict with the state's anti-union elite, quietly came to a close this week when felony rioting and other charges against the Five were dismissed in a Charleston court.

How a dockside skirmish exploded into one of the South's biggest labor battles in decades is instructive, and helps explain why "Free the Charleston Five!" became an international rallying cry and lit new fire under the Southern labor movement. It was in January 2000 that 150 mostly African-American members of the Charleston-based International Longshoremen's Association picketed the arrival of a container ship owned by Nordana, which had abruptly switched to nonunion labor.

To the surprise of the workers, over 600 state and local riot cops were also on hand, massed by air, land and sea in a show of force. Tensions flared, punches thrown, and several workers were arrested. The case was set to vanish into court docket dust, the local authorities pressing only minor misdemeanor charges. But the state's Attorney General and aspiring governor, Charlie Condon, had other plans. Concluding that to put black union workers in their place was the perfect way to launch a political career, Condon singled out the Charleston Five - Jason Edgerton, Elijah Ford, Kenneth Jefferson, Ricky Simmons, Peter Washington - for felony charges including rioting and conspiracy to riot. The busy Condon even assigned himself to prosecute the case, promising "jail, jail and more jail" for the 2nd and 3rd generation longshoremen.

Condon's crusade backfired. First Southern progressives, then the national AFL-CIO and dock workers worldwide ignited a campaign to free the besieged ILA members, culminating in a 5,000-strong rally in Columbia, S.C., this past June. Longshoremen overseas threatened to close ports if the case even went to trial. The outpouring of support soon caused Condon to decide this was a case he could not win - and he abruptly removed himself from the case, dumping it on a local Charleston prosecutor in October.

It was an especially sweet turn of justice that, only days after Condon fled the scene, the local prosecutor took stock of his own chances, and struck a deal with the Five. Each would plead "no contest" to one count of participating in a nonviolent "riot, rout, or affray", a minor misdemeanor usually reserved for barroom brawls, and carrying a fine of $100 - the exact same charge originally brought against the workers last year, before Condon entered the fray.

The labor movement learned a few lessons in this long road back to square one. It discovered that labor solidarity campaigns work, and that militant worker struggles can rise where we least expect them. The Charleston longshoremen and their allies can take pride in having shown what persistence and solidarity can accomplish, even in the hostile labor hinterlands of the South.

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ANTHRAX AS NORMALCY: 500 CASES A YEAR

Imagine if the anthrax attacks had killed nearly 500 people, instead of the four in the US who have died from the bacteria so far. Consider further the outrage that would most certainly erupt had it come out that the US government knew about the anthrax outbreak in advance, but failed to take any action to protect people from the disease. Then factor in the big drug companies, which have refused to administer out life-saving vaccines because to do so might undermine their lucrative patents.

Mark Green isn't mayor of New York today because black voters finally said "enough" to white liberal racism and spited him by voting for his opponent. They had good reason for doing it.

Sound far-fetched? Hardly. This is a rough description of what has been going on in Haiti since the mid-1970s, where nearly 500 people contract anthrax every year. You can search the major media and the US government in vain for coverage of what can only be called an on-going crisis. At most, CounterPunch has been able to locate a few press releases from the State Department warning US tourists about this danger and a move by the Commerce Department to restrict the import of certain goods made from animal hides, though not major league baseballs, which are manufactured in Haiti by workers making about twenty cents an hour.

Here is the text of an advisory from the Commerce Department : "Consumers who may have goatskin items such as bongo drums, wineskins, hassocks, small rugs, decorative wall coverings (mosaics), 'balancers', ladies' purses or unfinished goatskin hides known to have been imported from Haiti should place the products in a sealed plastic bag and call a local or State health department for disposal

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instructions. Consumers should not attempt to sterilize the product, incinerate it, or throw it away because of the risk of additional contamination."

The fact that so many American textile corporations have moved their sweatshop operations to Haiti to exploit pathetically low wages doesn't seemed to have prompted much concern for the health of their workers. Indeed, the only detailed analysis of the situation that we can find comes from the college of veterinary medicine at Louisiana State University. According, to the LSU study, "27% to 50% of goatskin products are contaminated. During 1973–77 there were 1,587 human anthrax cases reported in the southern peninsula or 317 per year; 85 cases in 1983; and 1,396 cases during 1985 to 1988, or 349 per year." Then, amazingly, between 1989 and 1993, no one even surveyed human anthrax cases. When the surveys resumed again in 1993, it turned out that in that year more than 100 people contracted the disease. In 1995, 449 people contracted anthrax. During these years, more than 700,000 cows and goats were vaccinated against the disease. No humans were given vaccinations.

"An entire family on our support program died of pulmonary anthrax . They lived down wind from a tannery."

"We have an emergency medical clinic in Cap Haitien, dealing mostly with burns, but have been working in the north of Haiti for over 30 years," Eva DeHart, of For Haiti With Love tells CounterPunch. "Anthrax is normally ingested in Haiti. The animal gets sick, they slaughter it in the market quickly and unsuspecting victims take it home, cook it, eat it, and because of their already malnourished condition and lack of available medical care they die. They also contract the disease from the factories. An entire family on our support program died of pulmonary anthrax . They lived down wind from a tannery when they were tanning infected hides. I can't remember a time where you were not advised to avoid skins and hides with hair for items being bought to bring home, and we have been working down there for 30 years. It is a poor country, you just accept certain restrictions for your own safety."

Get Pancho Villa!

A history lesson from CounterPuncher Cheyney Ryan.

A better name than "war" for the US's activities in Afghanistan might be "punitive expedition". This would bring out the parallels between the current engagement and an earlier ill-fated venture into an arid land—-the US invasion of Mexico to capture Francisco "Pancho" Villa.

The event that prompted the "punitive expedition" was Villa's 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico, a small town sitting three miles north of the Mexican border. Villa's early morning raid, involving a band of 500, in no way compares with the magnitude of the 9/11 crimes: only about 17 US citizens were killed, about half soldiers and half civilians. But the political motives behind the raid provide an interesting parallel to today's events.

The background was the Mexican Revolution and the US's erratic, self-serving response to it. In 1911 President Porfirio Diaz was overthrown by a popular revolution opposed to the old dictator's subservience to the wealthy and to foreign interests. The US's response veered back and forth between sabre-rattling and support for whichever figure it thought might protect its $1 billion in direct investments. After assisting in the overthrow of Victoriano Huerta by sending troops to Mexico's main seaport, Veracruz, the US waffled for a time between support for Venestiano Carranza and his northern rival, Pancho Villa. It was the US's opting for Carranza that led to the Columbus raid.

Villa assumed (as Osama bin Laden assumes) that picking a fight with the US would make him a hero in the eyes of the masses. Even better would be to provoke an outright invasion which would further enhance his status and force the fence-straddling Carranza to cast his lot with American imperialism. It was a fine plan and the US was quick to play its assigned role.

The outcry was immediate. We must "shoulder the trusty Springfield" and "defend The Flag, Old Glory" one headline shouted. Villa's raid was the first foreign attack on American soil since the War of 1812. President Woodrow Wilson felt he had to show that the US would not be "pushed around". Plus, a short little war with Mexico might quiet the "preparedness" zealots like Theodore Roosevelt who were calling for the US to dive into WWI.

The only real sceptic was Army chief of staff General Hugh Scott, who replied thus to Wilson's call for war: "Mr. President, do you really want to make a war on one man?" General Scott saw the absurdity here. If Villa gets on a train and goes to South America, he asked, "Do you intend to go after him?" In reply, Wilson suggested declaring war on no one in particular—just "whoever attacked the town of Columbus". (Does this sound familiar?) But when Mexico's Carranza protested loudly, Wilson finally named the so-called "bandit" Villa as the enemy of what was now labeled a "punitive expedition".

Poor Carranza. Hoping to avert invasion, he desperately sought to assure the US President that he would work with him to capture Villa. Wilson wanted none of it. Like our current President, all he wanted was an apology and the handing over of Villa—-even though Carranza had no more clue than Wilson as to his whereabouts.

The "punitive expedition" is not much spoken of in US history books, mainly because it was an embarrassing failure. At the head of a military force that would eventually number over 110,000 soldiers was General John Pershing, whose background included the suppression of popular revolts in the Philippines. Pershing knew about the rough, dry terrain he faced in Mexico, parts of which bear an eerie resemblance to the mountains of Afghanistan. But his plan was to prevail through his massive technological advantage, mainly airplanes and hot-air balloons (the former being new to warfare). What Pershing did not count on was the total hostility of the populace who sabotaged him at every occasion and kept Villa constantly apprised of his pursuer's movements.

Pershing's aimless chase eventually landed him deep into the Mexican countryside, where he suddenly faced the prospect of a full scale attack by Mexican soldiers supported by Carranza, who had now thrown his hat in the ring against the Yankees. With anti-American riots in every Mexican city, and some of his own troops mutinying back in New Mexico, Pershing's aim shifted from capturing Villa to getting his army out alive. A major prob-

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union hall hosted study circles discussing disarmament and imperialism. Now from all corners comes the refrain "Everything changed with September 11", but within organized labor one can't consider the jangle of responses to that barbarity without also noting echoes of history. If labor is having trouble talking about foreign policy it's not just because of the extraordinary emotion aroused by an unprecedented attack on American civilians; it's also because labor has had such trouble for many years.

Now AFL-CIO president John Sweeney says that labor is with "our president" on the war, but no one is under any illusion that he has the kind of seat at the table that Sidney Hillman occupied during World War II or even that George Meany had during Vietnam, and he certainly doesn't have the kind of numbers or member discipline. A lot of things had changed before September 11, and what makes the current period so remarkable given the enormity of loss is the lack of consensus.

In Cleveland, Bruce Bostick, an organizer for the United Steelworkers, says, "Regular people all over America are really confused right now, and since unions are organizations of regular people, unions are confused". In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Steelworkers president Leo Gerard counseled against "repeat[ing] this most recent tragedy by harming innocent men, women and children who, because of geography, find themselves in harm's way". Meanwhile, Tom Buffenbarger, president of the Machinists, was foaming, "It is not simply justice we seek. It is vengeance, pure and complete". In New York SEIU/1199, representing 210,000 hospital workers, officially declared its opposition to war, noting with pride that, as in the Vietnam era, it was the first union to do so. At a General Electric plant in Lynn, Massachusetts, an IUE Local 201 vice president, Lyn Meza, reprinted the New York labor antiwar statement in her column in the union newspaper and, for that, is being called on by some to step down. This is a local that has actively protested the WTO and the FTAA, but now its paper is thick with denunciations of Meza and anyone else who would voice dissent on what one member called "OUR war". Despite the concentration of progressive unionists in Boston, there has been no effort there to address the war outside personal conversations. In San Francisco the Central Labor Council formally adopted an antiwar position similar to the one articulated in New York. Out of Washington, DC, staff members of International unions initiated another statement deploring the "cycle of violence". As for the spirit of rank and filers, that was probably captured best by SEIU International president Andy Stern, who characterized the 1.3 million service workers in the union as:

"Antiwar activists who now believe that strong action is needed; Mothers whose children are in the Reserves, and have been called to war, and who wonder whether they will ever return; People who do not trust our government to act with restraint; Others who want clear-cut revenge; People who are confused because they hold seemingly contradictory thoughts in their head."

Stern suggested that the best course of action was honest, respectful discussion. There is a problem, though, because in unions, as in so much of America, the urgency of a subject long neglected has exposed the inadequacy of structures long molded to inhibit discussion. "What this thing has shown more than anything is that our political program ain't worth shit", Bernard Moore, an organizer with SEIU, told me. "Our members will pay the COPE [political action] funds, they might even vote for whoever the leadership recommends, but they won't look to us for guidance on questions like this. Members aren't coming to us to ask, What's a clear way of thinking about this? They're looking to the press, looking to the President; we're like the fourth or fifth in line. We've got to ask ourselves why?"

Part of it is structural: in SEIU, the enormous locals (some spanning several states), the heavy reliance on staff, most of whom did not come up living the experiences of a typical SEIU service worker; in almost every union, the top-down nature of the organization or a culture of disengagement. Even in a progressive local like CWA 1180 in New York, a recent membership meeting followed a disinvolving pattern. The president, Arthur Cheliotis, who'd signed the New York statement, held forth admirably on the war and its ramifications; "none of the members said much of anything", according to one who attended, "but, then, meetings aren't structured for people to say anything". Maybe most everyone was on the same page, or maybe they just thought the union hall isn't the place for such conversations.

There are plenty of people in labor, plenty of them longtime leftists, who don't think it's the place. Maybe they were never open about their politics, maybe for all their years in they never built a base around issues that weren't strictly economic; certainly they rarely had to talk about war, and now, with thousands of workers dead, more threatened with anthrax, and an official enemy who is a theocratic terrorist millionaire, they too are confused and fear being marginalized or worse.

In Lynn, Massachusetts, an IUE Local 201 vice president reprinted the New York labor antiwar statement in her column in the union newspaper and, for that, is being called on by some to step down.

"This thing has hit the psyche of the American people, of course it has, and we have to address that", says Ray Laforest, one of the conveners of the New York labor group and an organizer with AFSCME District Council 1707, whose offices are near the Trade Center. "Symbolically, to see those towers fall down, it's incredible. It's like our whole world is collapsing. We cannot accept traditional approaches, but we cannot go and hide either simply because we don't have all the answers. It was important to be immediately visible. Bush for me does not represent the United States. He stole the election and in a very real way he's stealing the national interest now. We have to discuss how this did not happen in a vacuum. And we have to be honest. The people who have done this have no notion of class. They are fundamentalists, following a script. But then there is the videotape of [former U.S. national security adviser] Brzezinski telling these same people when they were fighting the Russians, 'God is on your side.' I'm not saying it's easy; we have to have a more complex discussion than usual. If we do not, we have a lot to lose. This is a very dangerous time, but being on the defensive is not enough".

The question of national interest and

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who's ceding it to whom is not academic. By now the story of Sweeney bellowing furiously in the halls of Congress when Senate Republicans filibustered a $2.5 billion relief package for airline and aviation workers is famous. Earlier he, with many workers, was appalled when House majority leader Dick Armey dismissed the idea of including such emergency relief in the airline bailout package as "not commensurate with the American spirit". Sweeney was similarly shocked when the right equated fast-track authorization with the fight against terror, and when the Republican Governor of Oklahoma rallied the state to "defend freedom" by voting for a "right to work" initiative. (The AFL had expected no more than 400,000 people to vote; 850,000 turned out, striking a blow against terrorism by adopting the antiunion laws.) Now the AFL is rightly pointing out how much of a disaster the aftermath of the attacks have been for workers: the 108,500 union and nonunion jobs lost in New York since September 11; the 572,923 layoffs nationwide; the loss of health benefits for over a million people; the unavailability of unemployment insurance for 60 percent of displaced workers, and the inadequacy of benefits for the rest; the grim employment prospects when 8 million Americans are jobless; the three out of four taxpayers who get no relief at all from Bush's "economic stimulus" package while the richest corporations get a refund of $25 billion and many multibillion-dollar goodies to boot.

The weekend before the attack, Jobs With Justice, the national coalition of unions, students, environmentalists and religious people which has been deeply involved in the globalization movement, held its annual conference. The crowd, at about 900, was bigger than ever; the discussion, on global capitalism, international labor solidarity, the crises of inequity and Third World debt, was rich; the spirit, ebullient. Two days after the conference ended, the twin towers collapsed, and almost immediately people in Jobs With Justice began worrying if their coalitions would too, if unions would withdraw, if dissent would finish leftists off. Paul Booth, onetime anti-Vietnam war activist and now International organizing director for AFSCME, warned them that there was no benefit in taking a position on war. JWJ's national office issued a statement of grief that included support for immigrant workers and an admonition against anti-Muslim bigotry but was silent on war. Now it and its thirty-five chapters are feeling their way forward.

In Cleveland, workers involved with the organization tell me it is proceeding as if September 11 hadn't happened. In Washington state, the chapter has come out against war, resisting the national office's caution, while also expressing concern for the safety of American soldiers. In New York City it is involving itself in the debate over rebuilding and the burden of the economic crisis (its director attended the initial labor antiwar meeting but then removed her name from the list of endorsers). In Massachusetts the chapter director, Russ Davis, says, "I think we have a responsibility to remember what was going on September 10. It's still the same system; the same forces are still running the world. At this point, I don't see much of a base for an antiwar movement. But there are two wars going on, parallel and interlinked, at home and abroad. And people are going to see the war at home much sooner. They're going to be without a job; they're going to be without health care. That's going to open their eyes and lead to fundamental questioning of the system. We have to maintain our forces in the field for the war at home. If you work with people on those issues, maybe you can raise the war abroad and all the stuff about goals, policies, intentions, class interests, but it's part of a process".

"I think we have a responsibility to remember what was going on September 10. It's still the same system."

Looking at it from the outside, it would seem that organizing around issues of global economic violence should be able to pass naturally to issues of actual violence, terror and war. That it hasn't suggests again that if "globalization" is an ocean, labor is still wading near the beach. The shift from "Save Our Jobs" and "Buy American" to "Cancel the Debt" and "The World Is Not for Sale" has not been easy or even, as many who've raised the banner of internationalism did so as a subterfuge for advancing their own narrow interests (witness the Teamsters' effortless transit from their much-overplayed alliance with "Turtles" to their support for Arctic drilling, crackdowns on Mexican truckers, and now war). September 11 has complicated the situation enormously. So, for instance, the twin towers fell and New York garment workers, already living on the edge, saw their work disappear almost as quickly because trucks could not move and retailers canceled orders. UNITE!, which had earlier hired an organizer from the Direct Action Network and once contemplated chartering a train to bring needle trade workers to Washington for the (ultimately canceled) IMF/World Bank protests in late September, has now launched a "Buy New York" campaign, and its president, Bruce Raynor, another sixties antiwar veteran, is giving "America's New War" a pass."Terrorism", as one AFL staffer put it, "fucks up the united front forever".

Meanwhile, the labor right has shown no restraint on war. At the recent Transit Workers Union convention in Las Vegas every delegate was handed a flag; giant video screens displayed billowing Stars and Bars; there were patriotic hymns and a resolution embracing war by the same International leadership that tacitly endorsed the circulation of literature linking the TWU New Directions reformers to a Red and ruinous conspiracy for "union democracy". On another day in another setting United Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten pumped for war and then denounced anyone who opposed it as a supporter of terrorism. For that last statement she was booed by some of the rank and file. But where is the alternative—right here at home—for those who booed? It's not to be found in most of what's constituted itself as "the anti-imperialist left". In New York since September 11 I've heard too many "leftists" skip in an instant from the 5,000 dead to the fact that "people in the Third World die every day", as if the one could cancel out the other.

A longshoreman with the IBU/ILWU out of Seattle, Jeff Engels, expressed better than anyone the tangle of emotions that I suspect many rank-and-file activists are feeling right now. For years Engels has been involved in the globalization movement, trying to build alliances between workers, environmentalists and the "hipster" kids. He was on a tugboat when I caught up with him.

"The first couple of weeks [after September 11] I was mad and I just wanted to get the terrorists", he said. "There's a weak-ass peace movement that developed over-

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"I'm almost glad I'm on this boat because I was overwhelmed with too much information. But still, guys on the tug, I've heard them say, 'our policy on Palestine hasn't helped this.'"

night and it doesn't have much working-class support. Now I'm on this boat, and I'm thinking we've got to have a message that can resonate with working-class people who aren't lefties. The peace groups just discard that and go out marching. And I think, 'Oh God, we're in trouble now'.

"I walked into one ['left'/anarchist] meeting about the war, and I just turned around and walked out. I couldn't listen to this crazy sectarian shit. I'm almost glad I'm on this boat because I was overwhelmed with too much information. But still, guys on the tug, I've heard them say, 'Our policy on Palestine hasn't helped this.' They're reading about Afghanistan. Workers with the right information are asking questions."

I asked Paul Bigman, co-chair of the Washington state JWJ chapter, how its anti-war statement was going down with Boeing workers there, given the Machinists' call for vengeance and the company's decision to cut 30,000 jobs. He said there was some disagreement but no anger, and some plain talk. Anything could happen, but for now the local that represents Boeing workers has lent its hall for a JWJ fundraiser, and Bigman says people are treating one another with respect.

It was out of respect for the belief that no one should get away with murder, much less mass murder, that led New York City Labor Against the War to include in its statement a call for an international tribunal to investigate, apprehend and try those responsible for the attacks. The language did not satisfy everyone in the group (and was a departure from the citywide antiwar coalition, which has been devouring itself with grotesque debates over whether "justice" needs to be discarded in the ashcan of co-opted terms). But like "The World Is Not for Sale", the ideas inherent in that statement—telegraph it as "Justice, Not War"—are an invitation for discussion. Since terrorism is a global problem, where are the possibilities in international law? What should be the role of the UN? What would it mean to treat September 11 as a crime? What are the elements of a political solution? In New York the smoking ruins are a too-real representation of the failure of politics. And for those who complain that the peace camp does not know exactly how to stop terrorism, it's worth noting that nor does Bush's war council, which recently issued a press release, "Pentagon Seeks Ideas on Combating Terrorism." The difference is that the latter is willing to sacrifice civilians and as Dolly Ramos, a union worker at Bellevue Hospital who lost six friends in the towers but opposes war, put it, "I won't wish on anybody what I don't wish on myself".

That night at Teddy's bar, I spoke with Dennis Diaz, the lead organizer of HERE 100. Something transformative has happened in his union and in others that had members in the twin towers and that now, like the mutual aid societies out of which unions grew more than a century ago, have become enmeshed in the life-stuff of workers and their loved ones.

Even the Central Labor Council, whose chief business rarely went beyond electing politicians, has involved itself directly with workers. The CLC set up a hotline to provide people with counseling or help in maneuvering through the federal, state, city and private aid maze. It has a table at Pier 94, the city's command center for social services, to stay with people, union or non-union, until they get the help they need. It coordinated volunteers to work at Nino's restaurant to feed rescue and recovery workers, and set up a job-placement service. It has contacted all the city's unions, investigating where there might be jobs to get people at least through Christmas. Diaz was working with families of the dead, many of them undocumented workers. There were unemployment and Social Security checks to be secured but, more than that, there were children left behind in Ecuador, Africa, Mexico; there were immigration issues, rent to be paid, apartments to be found, school registration to see to, friends and relatives to console—all the big bills and small change of life.

Diaz said the tragedy has encouraged more people to ask why it took such a tragedy to perceive immigrant and native-born workers equally, just as the images of selfless firefighters and besieged mail handlers and overstressed public health workers has encouraged more people to start asking, What is the public sector? What is the state, if not these people who provide the services? Diaz said there hadn't been time yet to talk about war, but, speaking only for himself, he said, "An eye for an eye, I don't believe in that. At some point we're going to have to ask Why did this happen?"

That is where the possibility lies, in all those questions and the struggle for answers. At the first national march against the Vietnam War in 1965, Carl Oglesby of SDS made the case for stopping not only intervention in Indochina but also "the seventh war from now", the inevitable product of a military and money system that enriches some and grinds up others. The years since have offered up too many monuments to the job not done.

At Teddy's one refugee from the sixties who found a place in labor recalled that in the Vietnam era "we could tell people, 'What the fuck are we doing 12,000 miles away? If they [the enemy] were here that would be different.'" That was never satisfactory, and now, with terror, war, recession, corporate opportunism and the awful effects of what in a real sense is a clash of fundamentalisms, "they are here" in more ways than one. For workers there is always a war at home and a war abroad, and it is not enough to talk about one without the other. CP

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Amazing new Hitchens claim: As a seven year old he helped found Britain's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

lem was that Pershing's troops were so far from home that maintaining supply lines was a chronic problem. The only solution, Army leaders in Washington were beginning to conclude, was a full-scale invasion of Mexico.

By now President Wilson had had enough. With the war looming larger in Europe the United States and Mexico entered into face-saving negotiations where they ultimately agreed that in return for the withdrawal of troops Mexico would "ensure the protection of the frontier" from any further Villa raids. Villa marked the agreement by carrying out several more actions.

Villa became a star from all this, but then so too did John Pershing who was rewarded for his efforts with the command of American forces in France. The "punitive expedition" was very much a training ground for that Mother Of All Aimless Wars, World War One. And it was the model for all those actions in which the US government, confident of its purposes—-and the superiority of its weapons—-blunders into ventures whose terminus it cannot possibly anticipate.

When He Was Seven

"As a charter supporter of CND I can remember a time when the peace movement was not an auxiliary to dictators and aggressors in trouble. Looking at some of the mind-rotting tripe that comes my way from much of today's left, I get the impression that they go to bed saying: what have I done for Saddam Hussein or good old Slobodan or the Taliban today?"

Thus spake Christopher Hitchens in The London Guardian.

To CounterPunch's editors the phrase "charter supporter" seems to imply that Hitchens is claiming to have been in at the birth of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain. CounterPunch coeditor Cockburn was on the second annual Aldermaston march, organized by CND, in 1958. He marched alongside his friend Kayo Hallinan, now district attorney of San Francisco. They were both about seventeen years old, and didn't notice self-described charter-supporter Hitchens, perhaps because the peace-yearning tot would have been about seven and, though doubtless morally upstanding in his lust to "ban the bomb", below their field of vision.

Anyway, we're surprised that Hitchens is boasting about his support for CND, many of whose founders were either members of or close to the Communist Party and thus ripe for his derision as tools of the heirs of Stalin.

Maybe the term "charter supporter" means something different to Hitchens. We recall how in the earliest days of CounterPunch he used to boast that he was a "charter-subscriber", a claim that was never buttressed by the cold cash necessary to ratify this titular dignity.

Cole: No to Torture

We're glad to get assurances from Professor David Cole of Georgetown University Law Center emphasizing that "I do not condone the use of torture under any conditions." In a recent issue of CounterPunch we expressed our surprise at the ambiguous use of a quotation from Cole in the article by Walter Pincus in the Washington Post that kicked off the whole torture debate, which displayed many liberals voicing their enthusiasm for thumbscrews or "truth drugs" or delegating violent interrogation to foreign subcontractors.

Cole writes to CounterPunch that "while as a hypothetical matter reasonable people might differ about whether it would be justified to torture a person if you knew that he (and he alone) knew where a ticking time bomb is, and obtaining the information will save the lives of 1,000 people, that hypothetical never arises in the real world. We can never know with certainty whether the person being interrogated in fact knows anything, nor whether the threat is imminent, nor whether the use of force will result in accurate information. What we can know with certainty is that if law enforcement agents are given this authority, they will abuse it. Accordingly, I support an absolute ban on the use of force in interrogations. So does the Supreme Court and international law, which treats the ban on torture as one of the few legal principles that brooks no derogation under any circumstances." CP

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